

Downtown Revitalization Committee
Meeting Minutes – Workshop #2

December 23, 2008

5:00 P.M.

- I. **Present:** Chairman Harpie, Mayor Wright, Mike Lenares, Jay Bottolico.
A quorum was present.
- II. **Others Present:** Dennis Goderre, and Derek Kohl, BL Companies project consultants.
Ed Meehan, Town Planner and ten members of the public.
- III. **Minutes of September 29, 2008 and November 17, 2008.**

Mr. Bottolico moved that the minutes for September 29th be approved as presented, seconded by Mr. Lenares and approved.

Mayor Wright moved that the minutes for November 17th be approved as presented, seconded by Mr. Lenares and approved.

IV. **Public Participation**

Chairman Harpie requested participation from the public.

Mr. Robert Seiler – Urged the Committee to consider the good work of the Kiwanis Club and the importance of the Flea Market as a source of public service revenue. The Kiwanis Club wants to be kept informed of the parking lot improvement plans and construction schedule.

Mrs. Myra Cohen – Noted that the Committee meeting for March 9, 2009 conflicts with a Town Council budget work session.

Valerie French – Reported that the Downtown Business Association is off to a positive start and membership is growing. She supports the concept of a parking lot focal point such as a green that could be used for a variety of events.

Ben Jordan – Professional photographer offered his expertise and reminded the Committee to keep in mind the businesses along Market Square.

V. **Review of Preliminary Concept Plan Options – BL Companies**

Dennis Goderre presented the following information:

- Draft A-2 Property Survey and the initial work on the drainage and flooding of the parking lot's central area.
- Option A-1 Concept plan with "Center Green" focal area for public events; reduction of vehicle travelways to 24' to claim traffic; re-organization of parking bays; sidewalk network for connections to Main, Market and Constance Leigh Drive and the separation of cars and pedestrians.

The parking count resulting from this concept is approximately 415 spaces. The "Center Green" area is about 14,000 sq. ft.

- Option A-2 Concept without a center green but with the sidewalk, travelway and reorganized parking bays of Concept A-1. This plan would provide a higher parking count of approximately 480 spaces.

Mr. Goderre stressed the importance of signage to direct the public into the municipal lot from the perimeter streets. Also critical is the continuation of the streetscape details for lights, benches and pavement that visually connect to Main Street and Market Square.

Committee members by consensus preferred Option A-1 "Center Green" design layout especially the center green focal point for public events and the improved pedestrian sidewalk access network.

The Committee agreed that this concept should be taken to the January 15th Informational Meeting for public review and comments.

The Town Planner will circulate this concept plan to the Fire Department, Highway and Parks Departments for their comments.

VI. DECD Urban Action Grant Agreement Status

Ed Meehan reported that on December 11th the Town Manager signed off on a conflict of interest letter requested by DECD. The waiver is necessary because the DECD is using the law firm of Pullman & Comley as their outside counsel for this project; this firm has also represented the Town of Newington as bond counsel.

VII. 2009 Meeting Schedule – Notice to Town Clerk

The Committee agreed to keep the 2009 meeting schedule flexible and aligned with work plan established to bid the project in May. Ed Meehan will notify the Town Clerk that all committee meetings will be Notices of Special Meetings. Chairman Harpie noted that the Economic Development Commission revised its 2009 meeting schedule to permit the Downtown Revitalization Committee and the Economic Development Commission to hold joint meetings. This will enable the Economic Development Commission to participate in this project and lighten the meeting work load for those members who serve on multiple boards and commissions.

VIII. Miscellaneous Items

- Future agendas will include a second opportunity for public participation at the end of each meeting.
- The Town Planner's office will set up meeting alerts to members via the Town outlook calendar scheduler.
- BL Companies will provide Mr. Meehan with a pdf of the preliminary "Center Green" concept plan for posting on the Town Web page.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan
Town Planner